

The Book of Ephesians – Part 5

Introduction:

Now that we have completed the first three chapters of Ephesians we can review by remembering that chapters 1 through 3 discuss positional truths or who we are in Christ.

Chapters 4 through 6 show us how to take those positional truths and apply them to our everyday lives.

The first half of the book gives us spiritual knowledge.

The second half of the book teaches us how to apply that spiritual knowledge.

Remember, proper application of knowledge is wisdom, so proper application of spiritual knowledge is spiritual wisdom.

The Unifying of the Body (Ephesians 4:1-16)

¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

- Our walk in the Lord encompasses our daily walk with him. It is a way of saying how we live our spiritual lives.
- This involves our walk in the Word of God, our walk in the Spirit of God, our walk of faith, but also our calling, our ministry office, or ministry gift.
- I believe this verse can apply to your vocation or your profession, but the emphasis is on your ministry calling or the gift that the Lord has placed in your life.
- After all, your vocation should be a vehicle that you use to reach as many people for the gospel as possible.

- Although it may meet your immediate physical needs, usually in the form of a paycheck, that is not its primary purpose.
- If you have followed the leading of the Lord in your life, he has placed you into a particular vocation to help you function more efficiently in your ministry gift.
- If you are called to full time ministry, your calling is to help others do the work of the ministry in and through their vocation.
- Paul makes it clear that no matter what it is we are called to do, we should do it in a worthy fashion or in a way that glorifies the Lord and produces much fruit.

² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

- Jesus said In Matthew 11:29 "... learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart ..."
- To be meek does not mean you are weak and defenseless but it means that you have a teachable spirit.
- For example, the Bible says that Moses was the meekest man that ever lived (Numbers 12:3) and he fearlessly went into the court of Pharaoh and demanded that he let the people of Israel go.
- To be lowly is to be humble. Remember Paul, although he was given revelation no man had ever before received, did not forget that without God he would be nothing. This is true humility.

- To be longsuffering and forbearing is to have a patient and forgiving heart.

³ Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- A true believer will always walk in love with his fellow believers to preserve spiritual unity and peace in the Body of Christ.

⁴ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

- The phrase "one body" refers to the Body of Christ which is mentioned in I Corinthians.
- The phrase "one Spirit" refers to the fact that when we were born again we were baptized or immersed into the Body of Christ by the Spirit of God. This body includes all the people in the world who call Jesus Lord.

I Corinthians 12

¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

- The phrase "hope of your calling" is referring to the hope that we all share, the hope that Jesus will come back for us one day and give us our new bodies.
- Remember anytime you see hope used in this way it is referring to the hope of the resurrection (Ephesians 1:18, I Peter 1:3, Titus 2:13).

⁵ One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

- First thing I want to point out is that some Christians use this scripture to try and refute the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- They claim that the “one baptism” mentioned here infers that there is only one baptism for the New Testament believer.
- They say that this “one baptism” is referring to water baptism.
- This is easily refuted. In the book of Hebrews, the writer states that we are to progress from the fundamentals of the faith to the deeper things of God.

Hebrews 6

¹ Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ² Of the *doctrine of baptisms*, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

- Notice that verse 2 mentions the doctrine of baptisms which is plural, strongly implying that there is more than one type of baptism.
- And in fact, scripture bears this out as we find numerous types of baptisms in the New Testament: The baptism of John, water baptism in Jesus name, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, baptism of fire, ... baptism into the Body of Christ.
- “One Lord” refers to the fact that there is only one Lord and one redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. He earned the title King of Kings and Lord of Lords by his death, burial, resurrection and ascension.

- “One faith” refers to the measure of faith that was given to all men so that they would have the ability to believe that Jesus was Lord (Romans 12:3, Ephesians 2:8).
- This faith can grow through the knowledge of and application of God’s Word (Romans 4:17).
- OK, I don’t have time to teach on this right now but I want to get this out there because there are two schools of thought concerning the way faith operates and the way it grows.
- Some teach that we are given a measure of faith (a seed of faith) and that that faith can grow as you hear the Word of God, meditate on His Word, and take corresponding actions of faith.
- Others teach that we have been given “the faith of Jesus Christ” and that we grow in the use of that faith as we hear the Word, meditate on the Word, and take corresponding actions of faith.
- Quite honestly, I vacillate between the two, but I don’t worry too much about it, because the same actions are required regardless of the mechanics involved.
- Again, the “one baptism” in this verse refers to the total immersion of the new believer into the Body of Christ by the Spirit of God.

⁶ One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

- We serve one God, who exists in the form of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

- The Trinity or the Godhead exists as three distinct personalities yet they are one being.
- By the way there are some Christians who claim that the Trinity is a false teaching and would constitute more than one God. But we are not like other religions that have many Gods.
- The concept may be difficult but it is one that we should be familiar with. God made us in his own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26).
- He is one God in three parts. In the same way we are one man in three parts.
- He is Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
- We are spirit, soul and body (I Thessalonians 5:23).
- If we can exist in three parts and yet be one being then it is not difficult to imagine God in the same way.

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- This verse introduces us to the concept that every believer has been given a ministry gift.
- When this gift is given to us by God, we are also given the grace to operate in that gift. Different gifts have different levels of grace.
- These gifts can be categorized into “body offices” and “pulpit offices” to help us understand how they operate.
- Romans chapter 12 lists seven “body offices” which are given to believers to minister in the local church.

Romans 12

⁶ Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether *prophecy*, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; ⁷ Or *ministry*, let us wait on our ministering: or *he that teacheth*, on teaching; ⁸ Or *he that exhorteth*, on exhortation: *he that giveth*, let him do it with simplicity; *he that ruleth*, with diligence; *he that sheweth mercy*, with cheerfulness.

- **Prophecy** – There are those in the body who are gifted in this area. They prophesy but are not necessarily prophets in the five fold sense as we will discuss later in the lesson.
- **Ministry** – This word comes from the Greek word *diakonos* from which we get our word deacon. A deacon is a faithful server in the church.
- **Teacher** – These are individuals in the church who are gifted to teach the Word of God in the local body. These people are usually found teaching the children, youth, Bible studies, or “Sunday School” classes.
- **Exhorter** – These are individuals in the church who are especially gifted to share Jesus with those around them, whether in the church or out in the world. These people are the ones who find it easy to lead people to the Lord. They not only exhort sinners to become believers but they exhort believers to be more faithful and more dedicated to the Lord.
- **Giver** – These are individuals in the church who are gifted in the realm of business and personal finances above the ordinary. The purpose of this gift is to enable them to give large sums of money to the work of the Lord.

- **Ruler** – These are individuals in the church who help in the realm of pastoral care. They help the senior pastor and staff by shepherding smaller groups of people within the church. This gift is especially crucial in large churches where it is not possible for the pastor and staff to minister to every member of the church on a personal basis.
- **Mercy** – These individuals show the compassion of God to the sick, the elderly, the hurting and the lonely. These are the people who faithfully minister in nursing homes, hospitals and prisons.

⁸ Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

- This verse refers to the fact that when Jesus was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, he took the Old Testament believers with him.
- Remember, they were held in “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22), the good part of *Sheol*, until Jesus made it possible for them to be born again and rise into the presence of God the Father (I Peter 1:3).
- After he ascended, he sent the Holy Spirit who distributed gifts to the Body of Christ. As we said before, these gifts were accompanied by the grace to perform the gifts.

⁹ (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

¹⁰ He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- These verses refer to the fact that Jesus descended into Hell before he rose from the dead.

Matt 12

⁴⁰ For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

¹¹ And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

- These gifts are the “five fold” ministry gifts or the “pulpit offices” that we referred to earlier.
- These are gifts given by the Lord to the Body of Christ at large and are not to be confused with the “body offices”, previously discussed, which are to be used within the local church.

¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

¹³ Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

- These gifts are for the perfecting or for the maturing of the saints so that they can do the work of the ministry.
- They are to edify the Body of Christ with the goal of helping them approach the perfection and maturity that was evident in the life of Christ.

¹⁴ That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

- Another reason for the five fold ministry gifts is to bring stability to the members of the Body of Christ.

- Young believers can be easily led astray by false teaching. They can also be swayed by the circumstances of life.
- It's easy to spot this type of Christian. They are up and down, depending on the circumstances of their life.

Psalm 31

¹⁵ My times are in thy hand ...

Isaiah 33

⁶ And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times ...

¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

- These five fold gifts are to help believers in the Body of Christ grow to the point that they speak the truth, which is the Word of God, in love, just like Jesus did when he was on the earth.

¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

- We are all linked together and every member of the Body of Christ is important.
- When each member does their part, functioning efficiently in their ministry gift, then the whole body benefits.
- It causes the body to "increase" or produce more fruit. The whole body is edified as we do these things in love.

Summary:

The first half of Ephesians chapter 4 deals with the gifts or ministry offices that have been given to the members of the church.

There are 12 total gifts mentioned in the epistles of Paul, five "pulpit gifts/offices" and seven "body gifts/offices".

The five "pulpit gifts/offices", commonly referred to as the five fold ministry gifts, are mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 and are for the edifying of the Body of Christ so they can do the work of the ministry.

The seven "body gifts/offices" are listed in Romans 12:6-8 and are given to the church to be used in the local church body.

If you are not called to the five fold ministry, your gift will fit into one of these categories.

If you are called to the five fold ministry, you are probably already operating in one or more of these body gifts.